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May 12, 1999

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**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JOEL HEFLEY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS AND FACILITIES**

**National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000
Division B—Military Construction Authorizations**

This afternoon, the Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities meets to consider the authorizations for the military construction and military family housing programs of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 2000 and related items. The legislation we will consider today will be incorporated into H.R. 1401, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, as Division B. At the appropriate time, I will open the mark to amendment at any point. First, however, I want to make a few observations.

This subcommittee has expended considerable effort in examining the Department's budget request for the coming fiscal year. On a bipartisan basis, we, like our colleagues in the Senate and our friends serving on the Committee on Appropriations, find the budget request inadequate to address the scope of the need identified by the military services. Additional resources are required to begin to fix the long-standing and corrosive problems in the Nation's enduring military infrastructure. This infrastructure directly supports the training and readiness of the Armed Forces. It should also provide a decent standard of living for military personnel and their families. Military facilities are not luxuries and they are not overhead. The record this subcommittee has built over the last few years is not ambiguous and our hearings earlier this year were no exception. Crumbling infrastructure threatens the Nation's military capability and affects retention.

The Administration compounded the deficiencies in its budget proposal by building its FY2000 MILCON program upon a risky fiscal foundation. The incremental funding of military construction projects on an outlay-rate basis would surely lead to cost increases and delays in the delivery of facilities. The legislation before the subcommittee would reject the Department's proposal on a project-by-project basis.

This subcommittee, with the strong support of the Chairman of the full Committee on Armed Services, Floyd Spence, and the Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee, Ike Skelton, worked tirelessly with us to try to find a solution that addresses the needs of the military services. With their support, the recommendations in the Chairman's Mark would restore \$3.1 billion in budget authority for military construction. That seems like a lot of money – even in this town. And, certainly, there were a lot of competing demands for those funds. However, the members of this subcommittee – and of the full

committee – feel very strongly that allowing the Department to engage in the kind of budgetary gimmicks they propose would be shirking our responsibility to the taxpayer. I will not do that, nor will Gene, or any other member here.

With these funds, we set out first to fix the broken program left to us by the Department. Nowhere is the need to do this more apparent than in the area of military housing. The Administration proposed to construct or renovate over 6,200 units of military family housing and begin the construction or renovation of 43 barracks, dormitories, and BEQs for the single enlisted. That requirement costs nearly \$1.4 billion for the coming fiscal year. The Administration asked for only \$313 million – 22 cents on the dollar – to meet the FY2000 requirement. That is not acceptable. The legislation before the subcommittee would add nearly \$1.1 billion to the budget to ensure that this housing is built and occupied as soon as possible. In addition, the recommendations before the subcommittee would fund an additional \$75 million in military housing projects.

My great frustration is that the Congress has been forced by poor and irresponsible budget policy to find over one billion dollars simply to bail the Department out of the mess it created. My one solace is thinking about the military personnel and the families with children who will see their living conditions improve sooner because we did not sit idly by and allow the Department to wreck the housing program.

Similarly, we have funded the training, readiness, and other requirements of the active and reserve components. For example, the Department funded a \$251 million MILCON requirement for the Guard and Reserve at \$78 million. This legislation would provide the additional \$173 million in funding necessary to move forward with those requirements and would also provide an additional \$187 million in support of the reserve components.

In this environment, the subcommittee cannot fix all of the problems in the budget request nor can we address adequately, in my judgment, the unfunded requirements that continue to pile up due to the broad inattention of the Department to critical infrastructure upgrades. I believe, however, we have done the prudent thing. We will minimize risk to the most essential military construction projects and programs of the military services. We will dedicate additional resources to meeting the unfunded needs of the military services. We will continue to urge the Department of Defense to exercise appropriate stewardship on behalf of the taxpayer in the military infrastructure and facilities that serve as the platform for the defense of the Nation. The soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who serve every day deserve no less than that.

In closing, I want to express again my appreciation to the members of the subcommittee, especially the ranking Democratic member, Gene Taylor, for their contributions to this bill as well as their patience, understanding, and cooperation as we worked through a difficult budget request. This is truly a bipartisan effort and I urge all members to join in support of this legislation.

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